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3 February 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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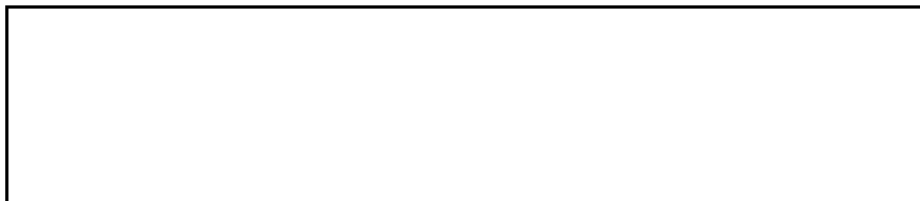
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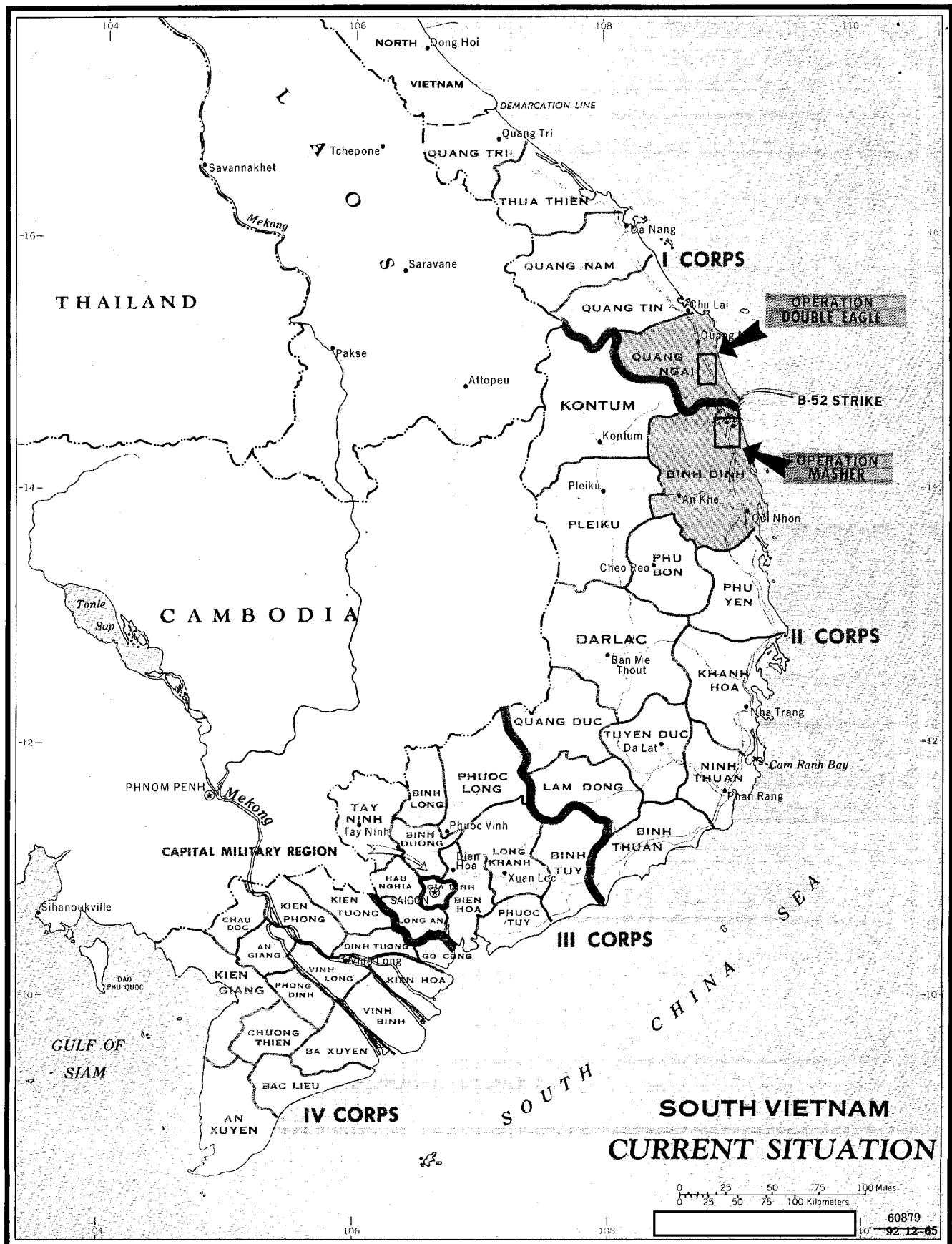
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Operation MASHER, the largest allied offensive of the war, is taking a steady toll of Communist forces in north-eastern Binh Dinh Province. Numerous contacts between relatively small units during the past eight days have resulted in enemy losses of 721 killed, 158 captured, and 614 suspects detained. Allied casualties in the fighting total 111 killed (58 US), 450 wounded (261 US), and three US missing.

At present, elements of the US First Cavalry Division are sweeping a suspected Communist staging area bombed by B-52 Stratofortresses on 1 February. No results of this phase of the operation are yet available.

Farther north in Quang Ngai Province, US Marines in Operation DOUBLE EAGLE have searched about one-half of an area struck earlier by Stratofortresses without significant results.

Communist Political Developments: Peking has again accused the Soviet Union of collaborating with the US to bring the North Vietnamese to the conference table. A People's Daily "Observer" article on 2 February carried the often reiterated Chinese propaganda attack on the "Soviet revisionists leaders" to the greatest length observed to date. It charged the post-Khrushchev leaders with going further than Khrushchev in cooperating with US "counterrevolutionary global strategy."

The theme of Soviet collaboration with the US in Vietnam has been emphasized by Peking more heavily since Shelepin's visit to Hanoi in January. This added

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emphasis probably reflects Chinese concern that Hanoi might at some point respond to Soviet suggestions for a negotiated settlement. The violence of the article further suggests that the Chinese are more than usually irked at Moscow and are probably responding to the current circulation of an anti-Chinese letter within the CPSU as well as preparing a position against the possibility that the Soviets intend to use their Party Congress scheduled for late next month for some new action against Communist China.

Also on 2 February the Chinese blasted the US move to raise the Vietnam problem at the UN Security Council. In a People's Daily editorial Peking asserted that the UN "has nothing at all to do with the Vietnam question."

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*North Vietnam - US: Hanoi anticipates the eventual introduction of "over 700,000" American troops into South Vietnam, but still believes the Vietnamese Communists can win the war, according to the North Vietnamese minister of defense, Vo Nguyen Giap.

Giap's latest assessment of the situation in Vietnam and of Communist prospects there is contained in a long article in the January issue of the North Vietnamese party journal, Hoc Tap. Similiar articles by Giap have become a periodic feature of North Vietnamese propaganda; he authored comparable assessments, for example, in July of 1964 and 1965. The articles are designed to provide Vietnamese Communist cadre, military personnel, and the informed populace with the latest official regime view of the war, formulated by a popular North Vietnamese leader who has successfully led the DRV's armed forces since their founding.

In each of his past articles, Giap has argued that the US was engaged in a "special war" in Vietnam in which its own direct combat position was limited. In his present article, however, Giap asserts that the US has now gone beyond the "limits and scope" of the special war and has shifted to a new "strategic stage" characterized by the use of US troops for the "core" of the fighting.

By pointing to the new stage in the conflict, Giap may be laying the groundwork for calling upon the DRV rank and file for greater effort and endeavor in the war. He declares, in fact, that "our nation must mobilize the forces of the whole country" to defeat the US, and must do "all that is necessary" to bring the war to a successful end.

Giap acknowledges the great "material strength" of the US and argues that Washington's strategy is to

(continued)

"rely" upon it to "gradually" win a position of strength which will enable the US to "end the war with a favorable solution" or "prolong or expand" the conflict as necessary.

Giap argues that there are basic political and military weaknesses in the American position in Vietnam which will bring about a US defeat. US troops, he notes, are thinly deployed throughout the world and Washington "cannot send to the South whatever number of troops" it would like without reckoning with "world-wide difficulties." In addition, the US cannot decide whether to make its main military efforts along the coast, where the full power of American weapons can be used, or in the hinterlands where the effectiveness of US weapons is limited. Moreover, US troops possess "low morale, and the US Army is not organized or trained to fight successfully against a people's war." Giap has made all of these points before in his articles, and it is probable that Hanoi does not overestimate them in its military planning, but does find them useful in encouraging its own forces.

In regard to the air attacks on the DRV, Giap acknowledges the possibility of more "fierce" attacks, but claims that the raids cannot "by any means cut off our main communications routes" and cannot shake Hanoi's determination to continue the support of the insurgency in the South. There is no indication in Giap's article of any change in the DRV terms for a settlement of the war, or, in fact, of any present interest in starting discussions on the conflict.

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* Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State or of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.

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Dominican Republic: [President Garcia Godoy is offering additional concessions to the military but the armed services may still force a showdown involving the Inter-American Peace Force (IAPF).]

[Garcia Godoy is now willing to keep the service chiefs in their posts and allow Minister of Defense Rivera to designate his own successor. It is not yet clear what the reaction of Rivera and subordinate officers will be to this proposal. *Rivera apparently sees the proposal as a way out of his predicament, but whether he can persuade the service chiefs to accept this course remains questionable.]

[The military has thus far been united in its resistance to Garcia Godoy's orders.]

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[] On 31 January senior military officers made clear to the provisional President their view that command changes now would lead to the disintegration of the armed services.]

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[According to Garcia Godoy, a major factor compelling a rapid resolution of the crisis is increased pressure on him from the left, including the threat of strikes and student-led disturbances. There is no firm indication that such agitation is imminent. Nevertheless, Bosch and other "constitutionalists" have been insistent in demanding command changes and they may not accept the proposed compromise.]

[Garcia Godoy and the OAS Committee have agreed that action to force the issue must be taken soon. Ambassador Bunker has advised that the IAPF should be ready to force Rivera out, but it is not clear that the Latins will go along with this advice. Bunker indicated that a "less drastic solution" will be sought, but warned that "no other alternative may be available."]

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